

Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

April 10, 2014

Work Zone Press Conference Highlights Safety

Central Office

by Patrick Wood

On Tuesday, April 8, Southwest District Engineer Becky Baltz, MoDOT Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger and Highway Patrol Lieutenant Dan Bracker gathered in Springfield to talk to reporters about work zone awareness at MoDOT's statewide news conference.

Districts

Northwest

Northeast

Kansas City

Central

St. Louis

Southwest

Southeast

Baltz opened the press conference by thanking MoDOT's partners and all the highway workers represented. In addition to MoDOT and the highway patrol, local public works departments, emergency response, and law enforcement were on hand to support the cause. She asked that motorists watch out for everyone who helps keep Missouri moving, so everyone can go home safely each night.

Ed Hassinger and Lt. Bracker took the opportunity to talk about Missouri's "Move Over Law." The law requires motorists to move over one lane and give extra room whenever they see emergency or roadwork vehicles on the side of the road with flashing lights on.

"The law is simple," Hassinger said. "If you see a vehicle with flashing lights on, move over and give some room. If you can't move over, you are required to slow down and proceed cautiously past the vehicles and workers."

Lt. Bracker said that in 2013, the Missouri State Highway Patrol spent almost 1,800 hours on construction work zone enforcement operations. They made 569 arrests and issued 637 warnings.



Watch a video of the Work Zone Awareness kick-off event in Springfield - [WZA](#).

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The Work Zone Awareness Week news conference included a memorial to the 22 employees in the Southwest District who have lost their lives on the job. Photo by Shaun Schmitz.

especially themselves.

"The Missouri State Highway Patrol is committed to providing the safest possible highway transportation system for everyone who uses our highways, builds our highways and maintains our highways," said Bracker. "We will continue to make work zone enforcement one of our top priorities throughout the year."

Hassinger also discussed the future of transportation and how the drop in transportation funding will change Missouri's work zones.

"MoDOT's focus is increasingly on preservation of the existing transportation system," he said. "By 2017 our budget will fall well under what it takes to maintain what we've got, and that could lead to the deterioration of highways across the state."

Regardless of the work taking place, the most important message of the day was safety. When motorists pay attention and drive with caution through work zones, that means fewer crashes, fewer fatalities, and fewer injuries. Drivers play a key role in making work zones safe for everyone -

Take Time to Be Safe

It's that time of year when we focus on work zone safety, by educating drivers on how they should navigate through work zones, reminding them to watch for workers on the roadways, and to move over when they see us or other emergency vehicles on the side of the road.

We also need to focus on ourselves and think about our safety in work zones and in everything that we do.

A new safety operation video, "Take Time to Be Safe," highlights some of the basics employees need to remember when preparing for the day's work, reviews the steps for setting up and tearing down a work zone, and includes an employee testimony.

The video can be found on the comprehensive safety site's video library - <http://wwwi/intranet/SafetyVideos.htm>. Supervisors are asked to use the video during morning safety discussions.



Click above to view the newest edition to the safety video library - Take Time to Be Safe.

Commission Meeting Summary

by Bob Brendel

In closing last week’s meeting of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission, Chairman Stephen Miller observed, “With increased funding, MoDOT and all of its partners are poised to perform in extraordinary ways.”

He based his opinion on the progress being made at the Capitol to place a ballot initiative before the voters for additional transportation funding, a prestigious award that MoDOT has received, and the untapped opportunities Missouri has in developing and connecting all of its transportation modes.

House Joint Resolution 68 is advancing through the House of Representatives, and could move to Senate consideration soon. The resolution would allow Missourians to vote on a 1-cent temporary sales tax that could be used for any transportation purpose. Over 10 years it would annually generate more than \$700 million that would be shared between state, city and county projects.

“The Senate sponsors inform us that getting the bill to the Senate will greatly assist them in addressing and overcoming any filibuster,” Miller said. “We’re told that if the bill gets before the Senate, they believe the votes are there to pass it.” The last day of the 2014 legislative session is Friday, May 16. As a joint resolution, the bill does not require the governor’s signature, and if passed it would appear on the November 4 ballot.

Director Dave Nichols told the Commission state planning partners are meeting now to develop the list of projects that would be delivered with the new revenues. These new funds could be spent on any transportation need – not just roads and bridges – as prioritized regionally. If the legislature allows the funding proposal to go to the voters, MoDOT will be prepared to recommend a list of projects to the Commission in August.



Commission Summary

The Commission awarded \$95.4 million in construction contracts from the March 21 letting, where MoDOT received 165 bids on 47 calls. Two projects in the Northwest District and one in the Northeast District were rejected due to excessive bids. One large project awarded was for the reconfiguration of ramps to the William Clay Sr. Bridge (Poplar Street) in St. Louis. State Design Engineer Eric Schroeter reminded the Commission there won’t be a letting this month, because of a shortage of work. “Eric described a perfect storm,” Miller said. “While the decline in state funds is well known, increasing costs are often overlooked. A recovering economy means that material prices are increasing and, in certain parts of the state, the recession thinned the contracting ranks causing a drop in competition and consequently a loss of discounted pricing MoDOT experienced during the downturn.”

David Guillaume, president of APAC-Missouri, presented MoDOT with the 2013 Sheldon G. Hayes Award for excellence in asphalt pavement construction. This is the first time MoDOT has won the annual award from the National Asphalt Pavement Association. The award recognizes work that was completed in 2012 on 15.3 miles of Interstate 44 in Jasper County. “An award for the nation’s best pavement is another example of the great work MoDOT and its contracting partners can produce when funding is available,” Miller said. Ironically, in response to a question from Commissioner Gregg Smith, Guillaume said the downturn in MoDOT’s construction program had greatly affected his company. Over the course of the recession APAC’s work has fallen off by 40 percent, resulting in the closure of some operations around the state, and it’s workforce has gone from 1,100 employees in 2006-07 to 650 today.



Michelle Teel, MoDOT’s director of multimodal operations, reported on her division’s work to deliver infrastructure and services in aviation, rail, waterways and freight. These modes are essential to economic development and a vibrant state, as Missourians consistently expressed during the development of the long range transportation plan. Teel shared these facts to demonstrate that point:

Rail

- Missouri is the nation’s fourth largest state for freight.
- Kansas City and St. Louis are the nation’s second and third largest freight rail hubs.
- Rail carries the equivalent of 15.5 million truckloads of goods, annually sparing our roads 43,000 truckloads of daily traffic.

- There are 3,800 rail crossings on public roads, and less than half have gates and warning devices.

Transit

- There are more than 70 million transit trips in Missouri each year.
- The 16-34 year-old age group is transit's fastest growing demographic.
- Missouri's investment in transit ranks 40th nationally.
- Missouri spends 50 cents per capita on transit – compared to \$4.16 in Iowa, \$2.09 in Kansas, \$1.57 in Nebraska, Arkansas and Oklahoma, and \$102.80 in Illinois.

Air

- Missouri's 124 public-use airports generate \$11.1 billion in economic activity each year.
- Those airports have \$90 million in project needs to grow this economic engine, but only about \$25 million is available.

Ports

- St. Louis is the third largest inland port in the country.
- Our other ports are woefully underdeveloped. Last fall, Missouri's 15 public ports had facility needs totaling \$70 million, while State port appropriations the last five years amounted to only \$3 million.

She noted that MoDOT does not have a dedicated source for transportation modes other than roads and bridges. Other modes are dependent on annual appropriations from the legislature and some federal funds.

"When it comes to multimodal transportation, Missouri has untapped potential. Better integration of all these different modes of transportation can make our system more robust," Miller said.

Team Talk

by Roberta Broeker

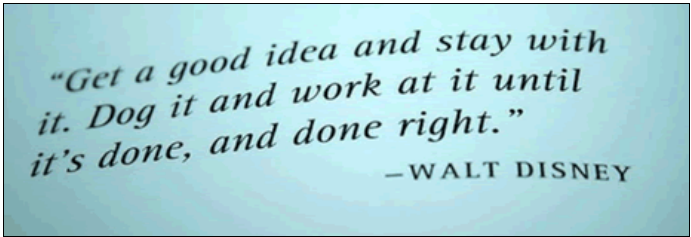
Hello, Team MoDOT! On Tuesday I had the opportunity to see your submissions for the Innovations Showcase at the DOMInno meeting in Springfield, Mo. I can't tell you how impressed I was with the creativity and inventiveness on display. It reminded me of the MoDOT value that all of our innovators truly have adopted: Be Better.

These employees saw something in their everyday work they knew could be better and took on the challenge to find the solution. They found ways to get their work done better, faster, cheaper, and safer. In the next week, videos and other information from the showcase will be available to all employees so you can see just how they did it and how to replicate the innovations for your own use. I'll also be talking to Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger and Asst. Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey about a plan I have for the innovations and really driving the adoption across MoDOT districts and divisions. We shouldn't let great ideas stagnate for lack of support from leadership.

Being better at MoDOT is more than just innovation. We strive to be better because it is a fundamental principle and philosophy of our department:

Be Better.

- **I Always Try to Improve My Results.** I continually look for ways to reduce the cost of my work while still delivering quality products and services.
- **I Improve Myself.** I take advantage of opportunities to build my work skills and knowledge.
- **I Watch for Ways to Innovate.** I take advantage of new products and technology whenever I can.
- **So We Get Better Each Day.** I approach each day as an opportunity to improve.



We've all had days where it's all you can do to hold on tight and get through the day. Sometimes it's hard to approach each day as an opportunity to improve. Striving to be better is certainly not the easiest path, because you have to challenge the routine of your daily life to move forward.

It's my hope that even on those days where you're scrambling to stay on top of things, you can take a minute or two to put things in perspective, think about what went well, what could have gone better and acknowledge that tomorrow is an opportunity to Be Better.

MoDOT is considered a national leader because we truly live our values. A few months ago in this column, I talked about how important it was to innovate and be bold, and it was easy to create a list of our achievements –from the Safe and Sound Bridge Improvement program to Practical Design. In December, I even issued a classic "double dog dare" to all employees, to come up with a submission for the Innovations Challenge.

And the result? Exactly what I expected: Success. Leading the way, being innovative, bold, and BETTER just comes naturally to us. No matter the challenges that lie ahead, I know we will not only succeed, but excel. Walt Disney spent much of his early life in Missouri, so I'm happy to quote him as a famous Missourian: "Get a good idea and stay with it. Dog it, and work at it until it's done, and done right."

Mr. Disney would have fit right in at MoDOT.

Remember to Complete Your Employee Survey

By Jim Dickson

By now, you should have received the 2014 MoDOT employee survey in the mail. You can complete the paper survey at home or bring it to work to complete. The paper survey also has the address for an online version. You can choose whichever way is more convenient for you. If you haven't received a paper survey at your home address, please contact Phillips and Associates at info@philipsgroup.com, or call (636) 394-4430.

Your survey needs to be mailed or completed online no later than April 30 to be part of this year's survey results.

2014 MoDOT Employee Survey Frequently Asked Questions



Q. With all the talk of funding problems, why are we doing an employee survey?

A. It's been four years since our last employee survey, and we've gone through a lot of change. Department managers need to hear from employees to make the best decisions on how we can move MoDOT forward together.

Q. Why use a consultant for the survey?

A. MoDOT chose to use a consultant to ensure your responses are kept confidential and the survey results are analyzed by someone without any preconceptions about our organization.

Q. Can I complete the survey at work?

A. Yes. You can fill out the paper survey or the online version during normal working hours. Your supervisor may ask you to do it at the beginning or end of your workday to reduce the impact on others in your work group. However, if you choose to complete the survey at home, it will be on your own time.

Q. Will my responses really be confidential?

A. Yes. The only person who will view your completed survey will be our consultant. Paper copies of the surveys will be destroyed once the responses are entered into the consultant's database.

Q. Who will see my written comments?

A. The consultant will collect written comments in a single document that will be shared with MoDOT's director, chief engineer, chief financial officer and the human resources director. Comments involving issues of discrimination, harassment or illegal employee activity will be forwarded to the Audits and Investigations Division. A summary of the types of written comments received will be included in the final report. However, details that might track the comments to an individual person or work unit will be removed.

Q. What will happen to the results of the survey?

A. Your survey answers will be combined with all the other employee responses from across the state. The overall results will be analyzed at the statewide level as well as all seven districts and the Central Office. The final survey report will be posted on the department's intranet in July.

In the months following the final report, our consultant will work with MoDOT senior managers to develop action plans to address issues identified in the survey.

Rediscovering St. Louis – A 250 Year Story

by Patrick Wood

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the City of St. Louis. What better way to celebrate this milestone than uncovering evidence dating back to the first years of the city's history? During an excavation by MoDOT archeologists beneath Poplar Street Bridge in St. Louis, Michael Meyer and his team uncovered evidence of where a French colonial home which stood before the Louisiana Purchase.

"I've been working in archeology for 22 years and I've done a great number of different archeological sites from Civil War battlefields to colonial plantations. I feel that this excavation is probably the most significant thing that I have ever personally worked on or seen," Meyer said.

These findings help to substantiate early documentation of how early settlers lived. An 1804 inventory states that the home was built in 1769, a mere five years after the founding of the city. The records claim that the home belonged to a man named Joseph Bouchard.

In a second home found nearby, archeologists found ceramics that Meyer believes to be French tin-enameled faience which dates back to the 1700s. These are the oldest archeological artifacts ever found in the city. Meyers states that these artifacts provide insight into the status and customs of the people living here. The blue fragment for example (see picture) was expensive tableware imported from France and was probably only for display rather than actual use.



Colonial-period French ceramics recovered from the excavation site. The left and center images are pieces of Rouen polychrome faience and would have been more expensive and used for display instead of everyday use; the upper right image is a sherd of Provence Yellow on White faience; the lower right image is a small sherd of green lead-glazed coarse earthenware that would have been used daily and is similar to what most European countries were making during that time.

According to Meyer, these sites were lost to time for a reason. "When people build new buildings, they don't necessarily dig out the old buildings," said Meyer. "What they merely do is they demolish and tear down the old buildings, lay some fresh soil, some clean fill on top, and build on top of that."

These artifacts hidden for centuries were found due to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 which requires archeologists to examine any area scheduled for construction before the construction can begin. Although the bridge was built prior to the 1966 federal law, archeologists have uncovered two city blocks of the area, preparing for major work to be done to the interstate ramps.

"This work is being done because, in general, people see value in this and the amount of work we do is measured against how important the resource is," said Meyer. "Because we consider this to be



Brianne Greenwood, senior historic preservation specialist, is hand-excavating the remains of the Joseph Bouchard house. The house was originally constructed of vertical wood posts in 1769, but all that remains are dark stains in the soil.



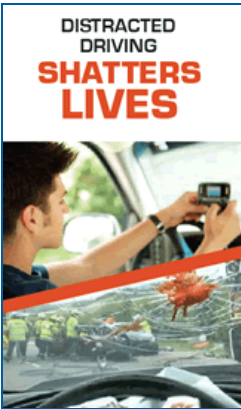
Rusty Weisman, senior historic preservation specialist, is excavating a large basin-shaped pit containing colonial-period ceramics and a significant quantity of food bone.

phenomenally significant, we expend additional resources on this type of project.”

MoDOT and the National Park Service agreed to display findings from this site, as well as others that MoDOT has worked on in the city, in future exhibits at the Museum of Westward Expansion beneath the Gateway Arch.

Safety Campaigns

by Kelly Jackson



Buckle Up and Pay Attention

Warm April days find more motorists on Missouri’s roadways. Some are on a mission, while others are just out on a leisurely drive to see the sights of spring.

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety reminds motorists that law enforcement will be out in full force on April 14, cracking down on unbelted motorists and encouraging drivers to not drive distracted.

April is National Distracted Driving Month. This year, in cooperation with the “Click It or Ticket” enforcement day, drivers will be strongly encouraged to pay attention to the primary task of driving.

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person’s attention away from driving, such as texting, eating, grooming, or even talking to other passengers in the vehicle. All of these could be very dangerous. However, because text messaging requires visual, manual and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most deadly distraction.

For more information visit saveMOLives.com.

Can They See You? Don’t Bet Your Life On It.

Commercial motor vehicles are an important part of our nation’s economy. They carry goods from coast to coast, and make up 20 percent of all traffic on Missouri’s interstates.

Crashes involving tractor trailers don’t happen very often, but when they do, the disproportionate size of truck versus car means those crashes can often involve serious injuries or worse. Research shows that in the majority of these crashes, drivers of passenger cars, especially young people, unnecessarily endanger themselves by not paying attention and driving recklessly around big rigs. That’s why it’s so important for all motorists to drive safely around big trucks.

- Don’t cut off large trucks or busses. Make sure you can see the top of the truck or bus in your rearview mirror before moving back into your original lane.
- Stay out of the “No Zone.” Big rigs have large blind spots on either side and up to 200 feet behind a vehicle. Pass only on the left side.
- Watch your following distance. Keep a safety cushion around trucks. Can you see the truck’s side mirrors? If not, the driver cannot see you.

For additional information regarding roadway safety, or other transportation-related topics, contact the MoDOT Customer Service Center toll free, at 1-888-ASK-MoDOT (275-6636). For more information on the Big Trucks Campaign, visit www.saveMOLives.com.



Fatality Update



What's Happening



Chat With the Chief

Remember to check out Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger's blog post on [Work Zone Awareness Week - Chat With the Chief](#).



April is National Stress Awareness Month

This month's Highway to Better Health newsletter, provided by Coventry, focuses on managing stress. Check out all the helpful information provided in this month's newsletter to help you get a handle on managing stress and living a healthier life.

The newsletter can be found on the Central Office page in this edition of Connections - [Central Office](#).



Oh Say, Can You Sing?

The State of Missouri is looking for home-grown talent. Would you like to sing for your fellow state employees?

Missouri's celebration of State Employee Recognition Day on May 29 includes the singing of our National Anthem and "God Bless America" during an opening ceremony on the Capitol steps.

If you are interested in applying, please send a note to deanne.rickabaugh@modot.mo.gov by the end of the business day, April 14. Be sure to have your supervisor's permission to audition on April 22 and perform on May 29.



Adding It Up: It's Your Time

There's a popular savings example that follows two employees who start saving for retirement at different times during their careers. Watch this month's video from Missouri's Deferred Compensation Plan to see how saving early in your career for retirement really adds up - [Adding It Up](#).

April Service Anniversaries

30 Years

Ronald D. Ettinger - NW
Jeffrey W. Lewis - NW

20 Years Continued

Diane R. Roegge - CO
Mary A. Jacobs - CO

10 Years Continued

Sally S. Oxenhandler - CD
Bradley Jay Rumfelt - CD

Douglas Harold Basham - CD
Randall Dean Potts - CD
James William Sharp - SW
David M. O'Connor - SW

25 Years

John L. Blades - NW
Mark A. Wiley - NW
Douglas L. White - NW
Douglas K. Mullins - KC
Betty Louise Shadwick - CD
Andrew Fredrick Goeller - CD
Shirley K. Bock - CO

20 Years

Thomas C. Judah - NW
C. Joseph Pappert - NW
Kelly Franklin Kurtz - NW
David J. Liebhart - NE
Simon M. Begley - NE
Bobby Gene Boyles - NE
Joseph P. Collins - NE
Raymond L. Smith - NE
Robert R. Deters - NE
Deborah F. Lipper - NE
Teresa Lynn Zeiger - NE
David A. Bower - KC
Craig Leonard Burgett - KC
Doug L. Sardeson - KC
Brad E. Watkins - KC
James Byron Bentley - KC
Curt D. Kolb - CD
Terry Marshall Morgan - CD
Donald M. Cox - CD
Richard L. Fennewald - SL
Jason Douglas White - SL
Jimmy James Couffer - SW
Jeff M. Divine - SW
Garry Eugene Brammer - SW
Eric J. Henson - SE
Larry D. Pierce - SE
Louis C. Trotter - SE
Jeffrey D. Jarrell - SE
Sheri J. Lamberson - CO
Leslie A. Wieberg - CO

Stanley Patrick Hoelscher - CO
Tina V. Vogt - CO
Thomas R. Honich - CO

15 Years

Ben L. Cox - NW
Kendra Michelle Ezzell - NW
Darin J. Huitt - NW
Dawn Michelle Miller - NE
Roy Kim Niemeyer - NE
Ronald D. Wilson - NE
Scott L. Brelsford - KC
John Patrick Sprigg - KC
Bedford E. Cline - KC
Shane Allen Blackburn - CD
Gary Lee Ludwick - SL
Charles Prince Gray - SL
Joseph A. Rocchio - SL
John W. Garner - SL
Onas E. Hart - SW
Bradley G. Mullings - SW
Robert L. Smith - SW
Keith Matthew Maddux - SW
Daniel J. Autrey - SE
John H. Caldwell - SE
Michael J. Crudgington - SE
Jonathan E. Estes - SE
Amos Paul Purcell - SE
Gary Allen Beauchamp - SE
Tommy G. White - SE
Scotty Dale Earnheart - SE
Danny R. Heuring - SE
Steven L. Smith - SE
Shannon L. Lock - CO

10 Years

Mark A. Redding - NW
Aaron G. Cartee - NW
Kenneth E. Ingersoll - NW
Matthew G. Swisher - NE
Deryl F. Gosseen - NE
Thomas Clay Ragland - NE
Nancy Jayne Engelhart - KC
Robert D. Simmons - KC
Jeffrey D. Mays - KC

Roger W. Achurch - CD
Gregory Thomas Lyon - CD
Steven Edward Scott - SL
Eugene Presley - SL
Jeremy A. Belcavitch - SW
Danny W. Cook - SW
Martin Wesley Hawkins - SW
Kurt Thomas Bagley - SW
Duane Norman Johnson - SW
David E. Bell - SW
Rick G. Hamm - SE
Travis M. Sanders - SE
Timothy L. Bowers - SE
Travis L. Crafton - SE
Justin W. Hills - SE
Julie Ann Herigon - CO
William Chad Abbott - CO
Jessica Ann Cox - CO

5 Years

Kevin K. Adkins - NW
Michael D. Hilsabeck - NW
John Douglas Shores - NW
Steve I. Walker - NE
Matthew J. Carroll - NE
Ismael C. Sierra - KC
Jeremy A. Diebal - CD
Kristopher A. Horbyk - CD
Gerald David Lamons - CD
Jason Allen Phelps - CD
Brian D. Deppe - CD
Todd Michael Bowles - SL
Marc J. Jackson - SL
Kevin Lowell Mullins - SL
Michael James Love - SL
Jeffrey Michael Conway - SW
Brian J. Jones - SW
Michael E. Guffey - SW
William A. Bates - SE
Ronald Knobloch - SE
Joyce Ann Jaegers - CO
Robert W. Henson - CO (Jan.)

Connections

The mission of Connections is to be a source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide.

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Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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Testing New Ways to Fill Potholes

by Linda Wilson Horn

MoDOT’s Pothole Patrol ended last week and the results show the harsh winter resulted in a 30 percent increase in pothole calls compared to last year. From January to March, Customer Service received 1,544 pothole complaints from customers. Maintenance crews used 6,820 tons of asphalt for those repairs, which is over a 200 percent increase from last year.

As our system ages, the pothole problem is only going to worsen. MoDOT is testing a new way to fill potholes with a material called Aquaphalt. During March, crews from the Eldon maintenance facility did some test pothole repairs with this material.

Aquaphalt is a thick, putty-like substance that comes in a bucket, which can easily be carried in the back of the truck. Crews pour the substance into the hole, spray water on it and tamp it down. It quickly reacts with the water, hardens and adheres to the existing surface. Then motorists can drive over the new surface.

“The benefit of this new material is it adheres better to the existing surface and is more workable as it reacts with the water,” said Maintenance Liaison Engineer Todd Miller.

The new material will be observed for performance. If it meets performance specifications and is cost-effective, it will be added to the approved list of products.



Senior Maintenance Worker Norbert Dickneite tamps down the test pothole patching material, Aquaphalt, on Route 54 while Maintenance Crew Leader Terry Blankenship prepares to spray the substance with water. Photo by Todd Miller.

Design Staff Explore LiDAR-Equipped Helicopter

by DeAnne Rickabaugh

It’s not every day that MoDOT’s Computer-Aided Drafting and Design staff get away from their computers, let alone climb into a helicopter. That’s just what they and Central District’s Design team did March 21 when contractors Bartlett & West and Surveying and Mapping of Texas invited MoDOT to see the equipment used to collect precise mapping information for eight upcoming projects.

The light detection and ranging equipment measures distance by illuminating a target with a laser and analyzing the reflected light to generate precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the earth and its surface characteristics. In addition, a camera makes takes 60 megapixel images of the area.

Mounted to the front of the helicopter, the LiDAR unit sends information to a computer and tablet inside the cabin. The system records exact GPS location data to ensure the high-tech land survey is on target.

“We’ve used LiDAR technology for five years, “ said CADD Services



Kevin Williams, LiDAR Acquisition Specialist with SAM, Inc., observes the camera and laser attached to the bottom of the helicopter. Both are capable of collecting data in conditions that limit traditional photogrammetry. Images can even be collected at night.

Engineer Alexa Mitchell. “It provides very exact information about an area’s topography without putting our surveyors in potentially-dangerous high-traffic areas.”

Though aerial photographs are still taken, LiDAR can “see” through trees and vegetation, extending the traditional January to March aerial survey season.

MoDOT Hosts Local Learning in Retirement Group

by Sally Oxenhandler

MoDOT Central Office recently hosted about 30 members of the local Learning in Retirement group for a four-week informational course on transportation issues and topics. Learning in Retirement is affiliated with Lincoln University and works to provide continuing learning opportunities for retirees and seniors. The sessions were held on March 11, 18, 25 and April 1 at the Construction and Materials Lab.

The group expressed an interest in learning more about MoDOT’s work in the areas of archaeology, geology, historic preservation and bridges. In the first session, ***Respecting the Past While Building for the Future***, Senior Historic Preservation Specialists Michael Meyer, Toni Prawl and Karen Daniels explained the effects our federally funded or permitted projects may have on significant cultural resources. The session provided a “behind the scenes” view of the work MoDOT archaeologists and architectural historians perform.

In the second session, Kevin McLain, geotechnical director, and George Davis, geologist, explained ***How Geology Shapes Transportation Projects***. Their presentation showed how geology and soils affect our choices for structures and influence the investigations we perform and the materials we use in highway construction.

Senior Structural Engineer Keith Ferrell talked to the group about ***The Wonders of Bridges*** in the third segment. In addition to providing attendees with Missouri bridge facts and figures, Keith explained how a bridge goes from a need to reality, provided information about MoDOT’s bridge inspection program and highlighted unique bridges and their stories.

Protecting and Preserving Our Natural Resources, presented by Environmental and Historic Preservation Manager Gayle Unruh, was the topic of the fourth session. Gayle outlined the natural resources we work to protect and noted MoDOT’s innovations in recycling, energy efficiency, unique roadway and building designs and resource stewardship.



Senior Historic Preservation Specialist Michael Meyer presents to the Jefferson City Learning in Retirement group on MoDOT’s efforts to protect and preserve the state’s cultural resources. Learning in Retirement is affiliated with Lincoln University and works to provide continuing learning opportunities for retirees and seniors.

Ease the Stress in Your Life

April is National Stress Awareness Month

Stress is a part of everyone's life. Stress can be positive from events like a new job, new baby, or a new house. However, stress can be negative when our bodies are in a constant state of stress. Chronic stress can lead to a multitude of health symptoms or diseases. Learning to manage stress can lead to better health. Take this month to learn now to reduce your stress levels. Read all the details in the [April Newsletter](#).

Tips to Managing Stress:

- Uncover the source of your stress. It's helpful to keep a journal to identify what is causing your stress.
- Get enough sleep. Getting seven hours of sleep can improve your mood and help you cope better with daily stress.
- Put a leash on your stressors. You might not be able to eliminate those things that cause you stress, but you can figure out ways to manage them or how to react.
- Eat healthy, regular meals. Don't skip meals and make sure the food you eat is good for your body. Include plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean protein.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water. Limit yourself to two caffeinated drinks a day.
- Get active. Exercise is a proven to be a stress reliever. Try a low-impact activity, like yoga.
- Decompress. Learn to relax with activities like meditation, guided imagery measured breathing.
- Give yourself time. Changing the way to deal with stress might involve some lifestyle changes that won't be easy.
- Take it one step at a time, and do the easier things first.



Central Office Happenings



How to Succeed at Behavior Change

A Mee Zone Event

By Robin Gammon, Coventry Wellness Coordinator

Tuesday, April 22, - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Have you ever tried to set a goal, but you fell short? Ever tried to lose weight, but couldn't stick to that diet? Or tried to stop smoking, but picked up those tempting cigarettes again?

Here Are The Facts:

- Only 8 percent of people who set New Year's resolutions succeed.
- Between 2 and 20 percent of people maintain weight loss long-term.
- Only about 4 to 7 percent of people are able to quit smoking on any given attempt without medicines or other help.

There is still time to join in this event via video conference for central office and district employees. This event is free. To sign up, visit [LMS Student Center](#) - Course Number 92000 – How to Succeed at Behavior Change. Choose "District Attendance (VC)" then check with your local HR office for available video conference locations.

Note: Robin, an employee of Coventry, is MODOT and MSHP's dedicated Wellness Coordinator. Robin is a registered dietitian and has her master's degree in Health Education and Promotion.



Thank You from the Samaritan Center

During the Centennial celebration food drive, Central Office employees donated generously to the Samaritan Center's food pantry. Because of that generosity, the following letter was received:

"Dear Friends of the Samaritan Center: Thank you so much for your recent donation of 1,048 pounds of groceries for our food pantry. It was very kind and thoughtful of your employees to make the Samaritan Center the recipient of this gift. Our pantry shelves are always in need of restocking and this gift will be so helpful in allowing us to have food available for those in need."

The economic climate in our area has brought more and more people to us for assistance. Thankfully, there are many kind and generous people such as you in our community willing to share.

God bless you for your caring hearts."

Marylyn DeFeo
Volunteer Executive Director
Samaritan Center

Connections

The mission of Connections is to be a source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide.

Customer Relations - MoDOT
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Editor: Tammy Wallace

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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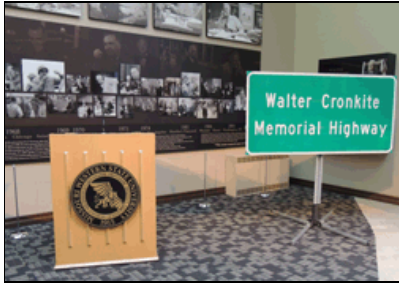
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Memorial Highway Dedicated



Missouri Western State University hosted the dedication ceremony for the Walter Cronkite Memorial Highway held April 4. A portion of U.S. Hwy 169 in St. Joseph, commonly referred to as the Belt Highway, runs adjacent to what was once the Cronkite family farm and was designated as the Walter Cronkite Memorial Highway.

Missouri Western is also the location of a memorial exhibit on Mr. Cronkite, who was born in St. Joseph. Though he moved away from St. Joseph at a young age, he would often come back to visit the family farm.

Ann Pearce, special assistant to Dr. Robert Vartabedian, president of Missouri Western State University, spearheaded the memorial highway designation process. Assistant Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey spoke at the ceremony about Missouri's transportation agency and the tough economic road ahead. Representatives Delus Johnson, Pat Conway and Senator Rob Schaaf, who all supported the bill through the legislature, also spoke. Other speakers included Dr. Vartabedian and St. Joseph Mayor Bill Faulkner.

All of the speakers were invited to help unveil the sign bearing Mr. Cronkite's name. The sign was later installed near the intersection of U.S. Hwy 169 and Route 6 in St. Joseph.



Prior to the ceremony, Maintenance Crew Leader Kevin Lytton (left) and Traffic Operations Engineer José Rodríguez set up the sign in the atrium of the Walter Cronkite Memorial.



Missouri Western State University President Dr. Robert Vartabedian welcomes the crowd gathered for the ceremony.



MoDOT's Assistant Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey spoke about the memorial highway designation process and MoDOT's role.



Representative Pat Conway and Senator Rob Schaaf unveiled the sign to the applause of all those in attendance.

Media Kick Off Work Zone Awareness Week

According to the Federal Highway Administration's website, Work Zone Awareness Week started as an effort by a single district with the Virginia Department of Transportation in 1997. The first week focused on raising employees' awareness prior to the start of their construction season. The dates April 7-11 were selected to coincide with daylight savings time, as that's usually the beginning of the the construction travel season.

VDOT took the campaign statewide in 1998 and added an external awareness campaign. The campaign went national in 1999 with the backing of the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

To kick off this year's awareness week, Northwest Missouri media were invited to join engineers and contractors in a work zone where they were able to speak to the contractor's Project Manager Jeremy Bexten and MoDOT's Resident Engineer Larry Jacobson about the dangers faced by workers and motorists in a work zone. Both also gave tips that motorists can use to improve their chances of navigating a work zone safely.

After interviews, the reporters were escorted into the work zone where contractors from APAC are working to replace twin bridge decks on Interstate 29 north of St. Joseph. Traffic is head to head in the northbound lanes while the southbound deck is being rebuilt. While that reduces the risk to the workers, motorists' inattention or reluctance to reduce speed through work zones still presents a danger to themselves and other drivers.



APAC's Project Manager Jeremy Bestgen is interviewed by members of the media just south of the work zone.



With the work going on in the background, Resident Engineer Larry Jacobson discussed the dangers motorists and workers face in a work zone and how they can lower their risk.



After formal interviews were conducted, reporters were escorted into the work zone, but were not permitted past the 'safe zone.' Past that point, workers used extra safety measures including a harness system to ensure their own safety.



Drew King, a reporter with St. Joseph's ABC affiliate station, captured footage of the head to head traffic around the work zone.

For more info

Marcia Johnson

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at

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Around the District...



Kelly Hall and Bill Noble, maintenance crew leaders from Wayland, spent a day job shadowing in customer relations. In the morning, Teri Zeiger, customer service representative (pictured), showed them the call report process, the contacts map, and many other duties she is responsible for while answering customer calls, including web work and newsletter writing. In the afternoon, Kelly and Billy shadowed Tana Akright, customer relations specialist, who took them through all the web pages she maintains and shared information on event organization and public meeting coordination.



KTVO's Good Morning Heartland helped spread the message about the importance of Work Zone Awareness Week by wearing orange on their morning show Monday, April 7, the first day of Work Zone Awareness Week. Ela Soroka and Samantha Croix donned personalized (by MoDOT) safety gear and interviewed Assistant District Engineer Kevin James.



The "Wall of Honor" to recognize immediate family members is now on display in the district office. Gary Tolivar and Tana Akright put the final touches on the display last week, and it is located just around the

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corner from customer service. We have two family members and one employee prominently displayed with their pictures. They include (below l - r) Jason Wilkerson, employee from Moberly maintenance, Mateo Dias, stepson of TK Brenner, Randy Harrell, son of Janet Groenda, Jacob Tolivar, son of Gary Tolivar, and Colt Brenner, son of TK Brenner.



Area businesses along US 63 in Macon are helping to get the message out about not texting and driving by putting messages on their signs. The Macon Comfort Inn (above), the Macon County Health Department, and the Macon Insurance offices, all very visible from main highway, participated.

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MoDOT Makes a Point LOUD AND CLEAR

Sometimes you have to use your outside voice to make a point. On Monday, April 7, MoDOT’s Kansas City District kicked off Work Zone Awareness Week with a news conference featuring its latest safety tool: The Long Range Acoustic Device.

The LRAD can be truck mounted to put out 149 decibels of very loud warning for motorists approaching a highway work zone to move over, get out of the lane where MoDOT crews are working up ahead. It’s the law.

To illustrate the point, MoDOT demonstrated the new system. The loud, sound-emitting system can penetrate even a well-insulated vehicle with the radio on and delivering an urgent message to those who haven’t moved out of a work zone lane to get over immediately.

The demonstration was only part of the message to draw attention to National Work Zone Awareness Week, which runs through April 11. MoDOT Assistant District Engineer Chris Redline pointed out that less than two years ago, the Kansas City District lost Motorist Assist Operator Clifton Scott, whose recorded voice was played back through the LRAD on Monday, urging motorists to slow down, move over and be careful in work zones so that everyone can get home safely each night.

Throughout America state highway and local public works departments observe the week, which comes just as road construction season is getting under way.

In 2012, Gov. Jay Nixon and the Missouri General Assembly added MoDOT vehicles to the “Move Over” law, which protects law enforcement and emergency response vehicles parked on the side of the road. This law requires motorists to slow down or change lanes when approaching these vehicles, and now includes MoDOT vehicles parked with amber and white lights flashing.

Read more about the [Long Range Acoustic Device in the Nov. 2013 issue of Connections](#).



Those Attending Route Y Meeting Agree: Ditch the Deep Ditches

A project to add shoulders and rumble stripes to a five-mile stretch of Route Y south of Belton was supported by the 37 area residents who turned out for a March 24 public meeting. They liked the idea that deep ditches in some places would be more gradual, too.

But some came away disappointed that MoDOT won’t be able to afford taking out some curves along the route, or make the road wider over a gully just north of 205th Street, where a pond to the west tops out during heavy rains and overflows the roadway. MoDOT Transportation Project Manager Allan Ludiker, Senior Design Technician Melissa Neff, Senior Highway Designer Travis Schilling, Assistant Right-of-Way Manager Scott Thurston and Area Engineer Matt Killion answered questions from those who came to the meeting.



The Route Y project between Cambridge Road and Route YY west of Peculiar has no shoulders and limited visibility at 205th and 215th Street intersections. MoDOT is proposing a \$1.7 million project to add three-foot shoulders, modify the 205th Street intersection and lower a hilly section north of 215th to provide better visibility for motorists.

The project is a continuation of MoDOT’s efforts to address narrow and deteriorated shoulders on



rural highways in Cass County. Last year shoulders were widened and rumble stripes added on Route 2 from Harrisonville east to Johnson County. This year shoulder widening will be done on Route D from Route 58 to Route Y in Cleveland, and on Route YY from Route Y to Route C.

Learn more about this [project on the MoDOT Kansas City website](#).

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Rosebud Mayor Sends Thanks to District

Rosebud Mayor Shannon M. Grus took the time to send Area Engineer Preston Kramer a note (shown to the right) to offer thanks to Central District staff for the time and effort they're taking to work on a transportation solution for an intersection located in the city.

The intersection of Routes 50, T and Rosebud Road suffers from a lack of sight distance. MoDOT provided the city with several options for a solution to make this intersection safer for the city's motorists.

"They haven't decided which way they would like to move forward," said Kramer, "but they have expressed a lot of gratitude for the assistance we have provided."

Preston,
Thank you so much for taking time to work on solutions for Rosebud's Hwy 50 / Hwy T / Rosebud Rd intersection. I really value the safety of everyone who travels through Rosebud and I am pleased that MoDOT is willing to work with us on this project.
We are fortunate to MoDOT assisting with this project.
Thank you again -
Shannon Grus

Bob Reminds Drivers to "Protect Your Selfie" During Work Zone Awareness Week



April 7-11 is National Work Zone Awareness Week, a time set aside to remind motorists to drive safely through highway construction zones.

To promote the week and raise awareness for work zone safety, MoDOT's mascot, Barrel Bob, published a "selfie" to remind drivers to "protect your selfie" and move over for work zones.

The district invited the public to take their own selfie with Barrel Bob and his younger self, Baby Bob, on Wednesday, April 9 outside the Central District Office in Jefferson City. The two mascots were stationed on the lawn between the district's main building and its survey building.

The district is also currently welcoming submissions of selfies that promote safe driving, such as buckling up, but reminds motorists never to take photos while driving.

Selfies can be e-mailed to CDCR@modot.mo.gov for potential use on the district's Facebook and web pages during Work Zone Awareness Week.

District Educates Students at Local Events

The Central District recently participated in two

events designed to educate both children and adults on being safe.

The district participated in "Go, Trucks Go!", a fun-filled educational event that allowed kids to climb into several big trucks and experience what it's like to be behind the wheel. This event took place at Osage High School and involved several other state and local agencies, as well as local businesses.

The district brought five vehicles: a mower, a grader, a tractor trailer, a bridge snooper truck and a dump truck. The bridge crew and the Iberia maintenance crew were both present to answer questions, and Buckle Bear tagged along to pose for photos with the kids.

The district also teamed with several state and local agencies to present a mock car crash at Belle High School. The mock crash presented a grim picture of what happens to crash victims who text while driving and also what happens to drivers who do not buckle their safety belts.



Around the District



This is a photo of a striping operation on Route 179 between West Truman Boulevard / Industrial Drive and Merchants Drive in Jefferson City. MoDOT completed the work during the first week of April and reconfigured lanes at the location to help reduce rear-end crashes.



Senior Highway Designer Jerry Nilges (left) recently retired after 28 years of service with MoDOT. The photo above was taken at Jerry's retirement party. Also pictured is District Final Plans and Reports Processor Duane Kliethermes (right). Jerry, you were a valuable member of our team, and you will be missed! We wish you the very best in the future!

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MoDOT Crews Help Remove Crane from Daniel Boone Bridge

by Jessica Wilson



Crews work to remove the crane from the eastbound side of the Daniel Boone Bridge.

Even MoDOT’s regional media partners helped by spreading the word of the closure to the public and keeping them informed when the interstate re-opened.

The interstate was closed for more than nine hours.

Every minute counted for MoDOT crews when a crane broke loose from its moorings on the Missouri River early Friday, April 4. The crane came to rest against the eastbound Daniel Boone Missouri Bridge.

MoDOT worked with contractor Walsh-Alberici, the Missouri State Highway Patrol and others to shut down traffic on I-64. This ensured the safety of the traveling public and allowed crews to remove the crane and inspect the bridge.

“It really took everyone involved on scene, as well as behind the scenes in traffic, motorist assist and at the TMC, to make all these moving pieces come together so we could shut down the interstate but keep traffic moving as best we could” said MoDOT District Traffic Engineer Jeanne Olubogun.

MoDOT employees from maintenance, construction, administration and customer relations, as well as St. Louis County police and the U.S. Coast Guard were also involved in the efforts.

“The way the district is set up to react to this type of emergency is great. We were able to quickly take action and it was an awesome team effort” said Jim Gremaud, project manager for the Boone Bridge project.



District Engineer, Greg Horn, holds press conference announcing the temporary bridge closure to remove the crane.

St. Louis Motorist Assist Operator Receives Award for His Actions in Near Hit

Incident

by Shaunda White

On Oct. 21, 2013, what started out as a regular routine work day for Motorist Assist Operator Larry McFadden, quickly turned into chaos just minutes after he arrived on the scene to assist a stranded motorist. Because of the immediate actions Mcfadden took that day to ensure that a wounded motorist was secured from receiving further injuries, he was awarded with a certificate of appreciation from the Missouri State Highway Patrol on April 8.

When McFadden arrived on the scene he activated his emergency lights, parked his motorist assist truck directly behind the disabled vehicle and set out the safety cones in their proper places. As McFadden stood only a few feet away helping secure the carjack for the motorist, a bus driver on the highway lost control of his vehicle and struck the motorist assist truck. The bus then made contact with the disabled vehicle putting the motorist directly in its path.

After the bus came to a complete stop, McFadden ran to the motorist and made sure that he was okay and was not at the risk of further injury. He then checked on the bus driver and passengers for injuries, and called MoDOT dispatch to notify 911. Larry returned to his truck and retrieved his first aid kit to assist the wounded motorist until paramedics arrived.

Sergeant Mike Petlansky, whom was working the scene the day of the incident, nominated McFadden for the certificate of appreciation to his Lieutenant, Steve Ferrier.

MSHP Lieutenant Ferrier said, “We want to thank Larry for an outstanding job. His actions were quick, professional and prevented a person from further injuries on the highway.”

McFadden stated that he was grateful that nobody was seriously injured and honored that MSHP took out the time to present him with the certificate.

“I was just simply doing what I was trained to do in my position. I did exactly what any of my co-workers would have done if they were faced with the same situation,” said McFadden.



Lieutenant Steve Ferrier (left) presents Larry McFadden with a certificate of appreciation at the Motorist Assist Building in St. Louis on April 8.

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Comments & Suggestions

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Southwest District at Work



ROUNDAABOUT WELCOME (upper left) - Assistant District Engineer Dan Salisbury greets attendees at a public discussion about a new two-lane roundabout to be built at Route 171 & Route 43 in Airport Village near Joplin. More than 100 people attended the meeting to learn the timetable for construction of the new intersection. (Photo/David Mitchell)

EXPLAINING HOW IT WORKS (upper right) - Neosho Senior Maintenance Worker Jeff Drake (left) and Neosho Maintenance Worker Matt Morgan (right) explain their entry in the DOMInno Innovations Challenge. Their Snow Plow Stand was a top four winner in the "Tools & Equipment" category. It was one of six entries from the Southwest District at the statewide meeting in Springfield. (Photo/David Mitchell)

SIGN OF THE TIMES (lower left) - Cassville Senior Maintenance Workers Darrel Arnold (left) and Richard Munoz put finishing touches on repairing a sign on Route 39 south of Jenkins. (Photo/David Mitchell)

SW District Hosts Statewide Work Zone Awareness Kickoff Event

by David Mitchell

National Work Zone Awareness Week, where motorists are urged to be cautious as they approach work zones this summer, is April 7-11. The statewide kickoff event was held in Springfield at the Southwest District maintenance facility.

Representatives from MoDOT, Missouri State Highway Patrol, various local police, sheriff and fire departments, along with towing

services and emergency medical services were on hand to talk about the risk these workers face while doing their jobs along busy highways.

At a news conference, MoDOT Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger reminded everyone of Missouri’s so-called Move Over Law requiring drivers to slow down and/or move over when they approach emergency responders or road crews working along the highway.

“Give them a break,” Hassinger said. “Help them do their job safely.”

His comments were made while standing in front of a memorial representing 22 Southwest District employees who were killed on the job since the 1930s.

“In 2013, nine people were killed in construction or other work zones in Missouri,” said Lt. Dan Bracker of the Missouri State Highway Patrol’s Troop D at the news conference.

Bracker promised law enforcement agencies will do their best to make traveling through work zones safer.

Work Zone Statistics

- In 2013, 8 people were killed in work zones on Missouri state highways, compared to 7 in 2012.
- Between 2009 and 2013, 53 people were killed and 2,781 injured in work zones on Missouri state highways.
- Since 2000, 16 MoDOT employees have been killed in the line of duty.
- The top five contributing circumstances for work zone crashes in 2013 were following too closely, improper lane use or changing lanes, inattention, driving too fast for conditions and failure to yield – in that order.
- The best defense in a work zone crash, or any crash, is a seat belt. In 2013, 63 percent of vehicle occupant fatalities were not wearing a seat belt.

MoDOT Southwest District Engineer Becky Baltz said, “Remember, these workers all have families who need them and that they want to go home to every day, too.”

Baltz made the same emphasis in a [video](#) for Work Zone Awareness Week, reminding drivers to be cautious when approaching work zones.



Southwest District Engineer Becky Baltz hosts the statewide kickoff of Work Zone Awareness Week at the Springfield Maintenance Facility on April 9. (Photo / David Mitchell)



Trimline cones outfitted with safety vests, hard hats and the names of the 22 Southwest District employees who have lost their lives on the job were part of the statewide Work Zone Awareness Week kickoff event in Springfield. (Photo / David Mitchell)

MoDOT Employee's Family Helps Pass Chemotherapy Bill

by Jennifer Williams

“I remember her hug when she came out of the room, and I could feel the hot tears on her face.” Tom Tate, Senior Maintenance Worker at the Cassville Workshop, recalls the moment his wife came to tell him their granddaughter had been born. They knew life would be different from the moment Loren Kennedy Horner, or ‘Pootie Lou’ as he calls her, was born. “I get special dispensation to call her that. No one else does – just PaPa.”

During a routine blood test, Tom Tate’s family was dealt the devastating news that little Loren was suffering from Acute Myeloid Leukemia. Loren, who has Downs Syndrome, had already been through so much in her short life. She was born with a septal defect, or hole in the heart, and suffered from ‘failure to thrive’. This resulted in her first open heart surgery to redirect blood flow. Once Loren was at an acceptable weight she underwent the second open heart surgery to repair the septal defect. She recently survived congestive heart failure and a severe bout of RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) while being treated in St. Louis Children’s



Loren's dad, Lance Horner (left) shakes hands with Gov. Jay Nixon after the Governor signed SB 668, aimed at easing the financial cost of some cancer

Hospital. At the same time, Tom himself was brought to a hospital treatments. (Photo/ Provided by Tate Family) in Springfield suffering congestive heart failure. “We’re copy cats, I guess.”

Chemotherapy treatments like Loren’s can be costly to families, with both the cost of the medication, and the time away from work for treatments. The Tate family campaigned for Senate Bill 668, which aims to ease some of that burden. The family has also taken part in numerous fundraising events to support Downs Syndrome and cancer research charities. In fact, little Loren was a star when meeting Governor Jay Nixon ahead of his signing of the bill at the Siteman Cancer Center at Washington University in St. Louis.

“We’re lucky, and she has responded very well to the chemotherapy treatments. She has two more chemotherapy treatments before starting the maintenance portion of the treatment, and her most recent bone marrow tests indicate she is in remission. We are hopeful that we will continue to receive positive news from here on out.”

“Loren is truly amazing, and has been through so much in just one year. I can’t wait for her to be able to get out and try all sorts of new things. I know her Grandma and Mama want to dress her up in big hair bows, but I’m going to get her in a John Deere cap one of these days!”

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Maintenance Employee Says Route 34 Improvements Needed



Following the loss of his son, Ed Benfield decided to pursue a career with MoDOT in hopes of making the roadways safer for motorists.

Ed Benfield was a Bollinger County Highway Department employee for 17 years before coming to MoDOT in 2009. What prompted his career move? His son, Cole.

On Nov. 19, 2008, Cole was involved in an automobile accident on Route 34 near Woodland School. It was deer season, which Cole loved. However, rather than miss basketball practice, Cole and his father made plans to go hunting later that day. On his way to morning practice, Cole's truck slid off the road, hit several trees and a utility pole. He did not survive.

"My wife didn't take Cole's passing well," said Ed. "Neither did I, but I knew I had to figure something out for us. God had a plan. That's why I'm here today."

As the Benfield's coped with the loss of their son, Ed applied for and was offered an Assistant Equipment Technician position in Willow Springs. He wanted to work for MoDOT to make roadways safer for motorists.

He lived with his parents near Willow Springs throughout the week for two years before transferring to the Ellsinore Shed, then to Silva

and finally to the Marble Hill Shed. Today, Ed is a maintenance worker at the Marble Hill Shed and says he's here because of Cole.

"Cole was unlike any other kid. Cole's philosophy was that you have to give everything 100 percent," said Ed. "He would listen to the things I'd tell him. I looked forward to what Cole's future held."

Reflecting on Cole's life, Ed thinks that Cole has taught him lessons as well. At the end of 2013, Route 34 received some much needed improvements. Ed is thankful for those improvements and knows that they will save lives. Ed takes pride in his job and loves that he has the opportunity to help make the roads safer for those driving on them.

"The residents of Bollinger County received a gift last Christmas season," said Ed. "I won't forget that the improvements came with a price. But if our loss can prevent someone else from losing a child or loved one, then good came from this tragedy."

In the coming months, additional improvements will be made to Route 34 from Route 51 in Marble Hill to Route 72 in Cape Girardeau County. The project will include pavement resurfacing, adding shoulders and side and center-line rumble strips.

Ed also stressed the importance of slowing down and buckling up so everyone can Arrive Alive. Ed and wife, Gaylene, kept Cole's vehicle near the public's view so students and friends would be reminded of how important safe driving is. Students and friends would come out to pray and sign the truck. Ed hopes it gave them peace.



On Nov. 19, 2008, Cole was involved in an automobile accident on Route 34 near Woodland School.

SE HR Manager Receives Patriot Award

At the Annual Regional Event of the Employer Support of the Guard (ESGR), Southeast District



Human Resources Manager Donna Ferkel was honored with the Patriot Award. The award was presented in recognition of extraordinary efforts in providing guardsman and reservists with hiring opportunities.

In addition, Southeast District Engineer Mark Shelton signed at Statement of Support for the ESGR at the event, which was held on March 25. The statement acknowledges the SE District’s appreciation of the values, leadership and unique skills service members can bring to the workforce and will continue to encourage opportunities to employ veterans, guardsmen and reservists.

Photo: Southeast District Human Resources Manager Donna Ferkel.

Thanks to the 2014 Work Zone Awareness Walk /Run Participants, Volunteers



With National Work Zone Awareness Week well underway April 7-11, the Southeast District kicked-off the week with a fun run/walk on Saturday, April 5.

The event began at the Willow Springs High School Football Field, and participants chose to take part in a 1-mile fun run/walk or 5k.

Over 30 participants joined in the run/walk to help raise awareness for the importance of Work Zone Safety, in addition to 12 MoDOT employees that assisted with the event.

Special guests, Chief Financial Officer Roberta Broeker and Financial Services Director Brenda Morris, visited the Southeast District from Jefferson City to show their support. Barrel Bob, MoDOT’s work zone safety spokesperson, was also on hand throughout the event.

“It was a great success,” said Assistant District Engineer Chris Rutledge. “The event combined fun for the whole family and the MoDOT team with a great cause.”

The proceeds raised through the event will go to MoDOT’s Benevolent Fund.

To view photos from the run/walk, please visit: www.flickr.com/photos/modot_se/sets/72157643652458693.

Congratulations to the 2014 Work Zone Awareness 5K race winners. [Click here to view the complete listing.](#)

Photo: Jordan Rutledge races his dad, Assistant District Engineer Chris Rutledge, to the finish line. With a strong finish and narrow victory, Jordan bursts across the finish line with a victory pose.

For more info

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Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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